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THE LIFE

OF

RICHARD ALLESTREE, D.D.,

SOMETIME REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, AND PROVOST OF ETON.

LONDON:
JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET.
MDCCCXLVIII.

The following Memoir was first published
in 1685. It is from the pen of Bishop
Fell.



THE LIFE OF ALLESTREE.

DR. RICHARD ALLESTREE was the son of Robert Allestree, a gentleman of an ancient family in Derbyshire, who being decayed in his fortune by the profuseness of his predecessors, retained unto Sir Richard Newport, afterwards created Lord Newport, Baron of High Arcol, in the quality of his steward; and being married, settled himself at Uppington, near the Wreken in Shropshire, where Richard Allestree, the person of whom we write, was born in March, 1619. He being grown up to be capable of institution, was sent to a neighbouring country free school, and from thence to another somewhat more celebrated, at Coventry, where he remained till he became fit for the University. In the year 1636 he was brought to Oxford by his father, and placed a commoner in Christ Church, having for his tutor Mr. Richard

Busby, who since is Dr. Busby, the eminent master of Westminster School, and prebendary of that church. Six months after his settlement in the University, Dr. Samuel Fell, the dean, observing his parts and industry, made him student of the college, which title he really answered by great and happy application to study, wherein he made remarkable improvement; as a testimony and encouragement of which, so soon as he had taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts, he was chosen Moderator in Philosophy, and had the employment renewed year by year, till the disturbances of the kingdom interrupted the studies and repose of the University, putting them into arms.

King Charles I., in the year 1641, being by tumults driven from London, and issuing out his commission of array into the several parts of the nation, did also direct it to the University of Oxford, where it found an active and a ready obedience, as by the generality of the members of that place, so particularly by Mr. Allestree, who engaged in the service, and continued in it till Sir John Biron, afterwards the Lord Biron, (who was sent with a party of horse to support and *countenance* the scholars in arms there,) withdrew *from thence*. He after a short stay was called off

to join with Prince Rupert, and by the assistance of the loyal gentlemen of Worcestershire was received into that city, where he was pressed by the Rebels' forces ; but the Prince came up seasonably to reinforce him, and thereupon followed the sharp fight in Poyick field, near the aforesaid city, the unexpected success of which gave great consternation to the Rebels, who being masters of the money, forts, and magazines of the kingdom, hoped to have carried all without a stroke. As many of the scholars as could furnish themselves for a sudden march, went along with Sir John Biron from Oxford : the others, among whom was Mr. Allestree, stayed behind, and returned to their gowns and studies.

Soon after this, the Lord Say, with a party of the Rebels' forces, drew into Oxford, and plundered the colleges of such plate as had not been before sent to His Majesty, making inquiry after those who had been forward to promote the King's service ; on which occasion, and also a particular accident that then happened, Mr. Allestree was called in question. The occasion was this : at Christ Church some of the Rebels attempted to break into the treasury, and after a day's labour forced a passage into it ; but met with nothing, *except a single groat and a halter in the bottom of*

a large iron chest. Enraged with that disappointment, they went to the deanery, where having ransacked what they thought fit, they put it altogether in a chamber, locked it up, and retired to their quarters, intending the next morning to return and dispose of their prize. But when they came, they found themselves defeated, and every thing removed to their hand. Upon examination it was discovered that Mr. Allestree had a key of the lodgings, the Dean and his family being withdrawn, and that Mr. Allestree's key had been made use of in this enterprise; hereupon he was seized, and notwithstanding all the defence he could make, had been severely handled, but that the Earl of Essex called away the forces on the sudden, and so redeemed him from their fury.

In October following, the King having strengthened himself at Shrewsbury with the supplies that came from the north and Wales, and the loyal gentlemen of other parts of the nation, began his march towards London, and was met by the army of the Rebels, commanded by the Earl of Essex, in Keinton field in Warwickshire, where both armies engaged. At this battle Mr. Allestree was present; after which, understanding that the *King designed immediately to march to Oxford, and make his court at the accustomed place, the*

deanery at Christ Church, which was in part left to his care in the absence of the Dean, hasting thither he was taken prisoner by a party from Broughton House, which was garrisoned by the Lord Say for the Parliament. His confinement here was very short, the garrison surrendering itself to the King's forces, who summoned it in their passage.

The war being now formed, and the King being returned from the fight at Brainford, having made Oxford his head quarters, Mr. Allestree settled himself again to his study, and in the next spring took his degree of Master of Arts; after which he was in great hazard of his life, being seized by the pestilential disease which raged in the garrison, and which was fatal to very many eminent men of all employments and conditions; and fell more severely upon him by reason of a relapse, which doubled the calamity and danger.

Having recovered a little strength, he was engaged to employ it in military service, the exigence of His Majesty's affairs calling for the aid of all his loyal subjects, and in particular the scholars: and accordingly a regiment of them was raised, who served as volunteers without any pay or reward, and performed all duties *not only in the garrison, and sallies for the defence of it in*

case of attacks and sieges ; but were also commanded upon parties abroad, and endured the fatigue of marches, and ill-treatment of mean quarters, differing in nothing from the poor mercenary soldier, besides their civility and justice to the country people while they stayed with them, and paying them at departure ; things so unusual, that when at their going off from quarters they offered their landlords money, they imagined it done in jest and abuse, and at last by finding it left with them, were convinced that it was done in earnest. In this regiment Mr. Allestree, though a Master of Arts and fellow of the college, thought it no disgrace to carry a musket, and perform all duties of a common soldier, forward upon all occasions to put himself into action. And in this service he continued till the unhappy end of the war, gaining still what time was left from military duties, to the prosecution of his studies : nay, joining both together, frequently holding his musket in one hand and book in the other, and making the watchings of a soldier the lucubrations of a student.

But then when carnal weapons proved frustrate, and Divine Providence called His servants to the *more Christian exercises of prayers and tears for the defence of the King and the Church*, Mr.

Allestree wholly betook himself to these, and put himself into that warfare to which his former education had designed him ; entering into holy Orders, at a time when there was no prospect of temporal advantage ; and his being in the service of GOD threatened no less danger than his having been in the service of his Prince.

In that little interval of safety which the Articles of Oxford gave, and was for some time continued, while the two factions of the Rebels were in contest who should divide the spoil of the nation, and enjoy the price of blood ; Mr. Allestree with great sedulity addicted himself unto his studies, and became a tutor of many young gentlemen and other students ; which trust he discharged with great sufficiency, as he did also the office of censor in the college. Moreover he bore a part in the signal test of the loyalty of the University of Oxford, possibly the greatest that has been given by any society of men ; I mean the passing of the solemn decree and judgment of theirs against the Covenant and Rebellion inflamed and fomented by it, performed in convocation, when the city was held by a garrison of the Rebels, whose swords were at the throats of those confessors ; and yet the decree was carried by a most unanimous suffrage of the whole body, there being but

one dissenter in that numerous senate, and he a person who had absented himself from the University during the war, and taken part with the Rebels.

Soon after which great performance, the Visitors of the pretended Parliament being at last come with a second commission to kill and take possession, having lost their first by outstaying in a long prayer and a sermon the time assigned for the opening of it, began their inquiry, and did it not as one would have expected from men of zeal and godliness, with an inspection into vice and immorality, but set their whole affair upon the short issue of submitting to the authority of the pretended Parliament. Then they who could prostitute their allegiance to their Prince, and oaths to the University, and their local Visitors, and comply with the lust of these usurpers, though never so flagitious, were immediately received to favour. All others, however meriting, were without further regard proscribed, the method whereof was, to write the names of as many as they thought fit to sacrifice at once, in paper, and affix it upon the door of S. Mary's church, wherein it was signified that the persons there named were by the *authority of the Visitors banished the University, and required to depart the precincts thereof within*

three days, upon pain of being taken for spies of war, and accordingly proceeded against. By which practice often repeated, the men of greatest hope and merit in the University were spoiled of all things, and not suffered to breathe the common air; so that within the compass of a few weeks an almost general riddance was made of the loyal University of Oxford; in whose room succeeded an illiterate rabble, swept up from the ploughtail, from shops and grammar schools, and the dregs of the neighbour University. Though in that scandalous number some few there were, who, notwithstanding they had parts and learning, were preferred upon the account of their relations; who merited a better title to the places they possessed, and have since proved useful men in the Church and State. Those of the ancient stock who were spared upon this trial, were afterwards cast off upon the second test of the engagement, till in the end there were left very few legitimate members in any of the colleges.

In this diffusive ruin Mr. Allestree had an early share, being proscribed about the middle of July, in the year 1648. And though he had the care of several persons of quality, his pupils, and accounts of his own and theirs to make up; he with *difficulty* obtained from the governor of the town,

Lieut.-Colonel Kelsey, a little respite, for the settling his affairs, and doing justice to those for whom he was concerned; the Visitors utterly refusing his request, for this reason, as Dr. Rogers, one of their number, was pleased to word it, "because he was an eminent man."

Mr. Allestree being thus driven from Oxford, retired into Shropshire, and was entertained as chaplain to the Honourable Francis Newport, Esq., now Viscount Newport, where he continued till such time as Richard Lord Newport, the father, died in France, whither he had some time before retired to avoid the insolence of the conquering Rebels. On this occasion Mr. Allestree was sent over to clear accounts, and see if any thing could be preserved from the inhospitable pretence of the *droit d' aubaine*, which pillages those strangers who happen to die in the French dominions. Mr. Allestree having despatched this affair with good success, came back to his employment, and continued in it till His Majesty's march into England with the Scotch army, and his miraculous escape at Worcester; at which time the managers of the King's affairs wanting an intelligent and faithful person to send over to His Majesty, desired Mr. Allestree to undertake the journey, which accordingly he did, and having attended the King at

Rouen, and received his despatches, he came back into England.

At his return he found his friends Mr. Dolben and Mr. Fell, the present Archbishop of York, and Bishop of Oxford, who had likewise been banished the University, adventuring to sojourn privately there, and serve the uses of those who adhered to the Church of England, in performing * religious offices according to the order of the Church; whereupon he joined himself to their assistance, and continued with them till such time as Sir Antony Cope, a loyal young gentleman of considerable quality and fortune in the county of Oxford, prevailed upon him to live in his family; which he did for several years, having liberty to go or stay as his occasions required, whereby he was enabled to step aside without notice upon messages from the King's friends; which service he managed with great courage and dexterity.

After several difficult journeys successfully performed, in the winter before His Majesty's happy restoration, he was sent over into Flanders, from whence returning with letters, he upon his landing at Dover, was seized by a party of soldiers,

* In the Hall of Christ Church is a picture representing them saying the Prayers of the Church in company with Mr. Allestree.

who waited for him : the Rebels' spy, who was employed by them in His Majesty's court, having given notice of his despatch ; and described particularly his person and his habit. But notwithstanding this diligence of the Rebels, Mr. Allestree had so much presence of mind, to secure his letters, and shift them into a faithful hand, who took care of them.

The soldiers according to their orders guarded him to London, where he was examined by a Committee of the Council of Safety, and charged with having correspondence with the King, and having brought letters from him, which they backed with several circumstances of his journey, and threats of utmost severity in case he should persist in contumacy, and not confess the truth. But they not being able by questions to entrap, nor menaces to fright Mr. Allestree to betray either himself or others, he was sent prisoner to Lambeth House, which was then made a gaol for the King's friends, where by ill-usage he contracted a sickness which was like to have cost him his life. After the durance of about six or eight weeks, his friends made means for his enlargement, which was the easier obtained, for that some of the leaders of the party, seeing things move towards His Majesty's restoration, were willing by kindnesses to

recommend themselves in case of a revolution ; among whom was the late Earl of Shaftesbury, who was used to value himself that Mr. Allestree owed his preservation to him. Mr. Allestree, having obtained liberty, returned to Oxfordshire, from whence, after a short stay, he went into Shropshire to see his relations : in his return from thence, designing in his way to visit his excellent friend, Dr. Hammond, at Westwood near Worcester, he at the gate met the body of that great man carrying to his burial ; which circumstance is therefore mentioned, because that eminent light of the English Church at his death gave this testimony not only of his kindness to Mr. Allestree, but also of his esteem of his parts and learning, that he left him his library of books as a legacy, well knowing that in his hands they would be useful weapons for the defence of that cause he had during life so vigorously asserted.

The King being happily returned, Mr. Allestree was soon after made Canon of Christ Church, where he cheerfully concurred to the attempt, which was set on foot there, for the repairing of those decays and ruins which had been made by the late usurpers ; for however those godly robbers who had invaded that church and college suffered them both almost to drop upon their

heads, and without shame sawed down for firing the timber work of the north side of the great quadrangle, the legitimate children were concerned first to clothe their mother's nakedness, and not till that was provided for, consider their own.

Mr. Allestree at the same time undertook one of the Lectures of the City, thinking it might be a service to instil principles of loyalty there after the contrary infusions of schismatical rebel teachers, which for so many years had been the gospel of that place, discountenanced by none of the parochial ministers besides Mr. Lamplugh, the now Reverend Bishop of Exeter, who had the courage and loyalty there to own the doctrines of the Church of England in the worst of times. This lecture Mr. Allestree continued for several years, never receiving any part of the salary belonging to it, but ordering that it should be distributed among the poor.

While he employed himself in popular preaching, he was also called to the service of the Court, being the King's Chaplain, and also to the severer studies of scholastical learning, in his exercise for the degree of Doctor, and Moderatorship in Divinity in the college; and soon after, upon the vacancy of the chair of that faculty, to the laborious employment of *Regius Professor* in the University.

In the year 1665 the Provostship of Eton falling void, that honourable and beneficial employment was by His Majesty's especial grace and favour conferred upon him, to the acceptance whereof he was not without difficulty induced; and particularly the consideration that a great interest was made by a layman, who probably might succeed upon the advantage of his refusal, notwithstanding that the provost there be actually the parson of Eton parish, and presented to the cure and instituted by the Bishop of Lincoln the diocesan, as all other parish priests are: so that as nothing could be more plainly sacrilegious and irregular in itself, than such an usurpation by a lay person; so nothing could be a greater disservice to the Church, than by an unseasonable modesty to make way for it. Upon these motives it was, that Dr. Allestree became Provost of Eton; and for the same reason it was, that during his life he continued so, never hearkening to any offer of preferment, which might make a vacancy, and repeat the former hazard. And it may be truly said that this was the greatest secular care that he carried with him into another world, it being his dying request unto his friends, to interpose with His sacred Majesty, that he might have a successor lawfully capable, and who would promote *the welfare of the college.*

The succession in the chair he more timely secured, for finding his health and particularly his eyesight exceedingly impaired by the toil of that employment, he resigned it in the year 1679, and had the satisfaction to be succeeded by his friend Dr. Jane, of whose abilities he had perfect knowledge.

But diseases are not cured by the removal of the causes which first occasioned them; and though by the use of mineral waters in the summer season, and the taking of journeys in the autumn, he for some time supported himself, the decay continued and increased upon him, till it was formed into a dropsy; the prevalence of which was so great and sudden that his physicians advised him by all means to come up to London, where he might be near their inspection and care; in compliance with whose desires, more than from an expectation of cure, he went thither, and having taken a private lodging, submitted himself to the methods they proposed: in the mean time settling his little temporal concerns; but was more intent upon his everlasting interests, employing those vacancies which his sickness gave in attending the offices of the Church constantly read to him, and his private devotions; and when he saw his end approaching, in receiving the great *Viaticum of the holy Sacrament*: in reference *whereto having desired those friends of his who*

happened to be in town to communicate with him, the present Lord Archbishop of York, the Lord Bishop of London, the Lord Bishop of Lincoln, the Lord Bishop of Exeter, the Lord Bishop of S. Asaph, the Rev. Dr. Busby, and Mr. Fell (one of the fellows of Eton, who continued with him the whole time of his sickness); he afterwards took his last leave of them with great equanimity and constancy of mind, and waited for the hour of his release.

Having hitherto drawn together the series of actions and employments which made up Dr. Allestree's life, it will not be amiss to set him in another light, and take a prospect of his mind and personal qualifications. As to his bodily appearance and outward features, as they are of less importance, so are they in recent memory, and by sculpture and other delineations are so generally known, that there will be no need they should be expressed by words.

His mind, that nobler part of him, was composed by an extraordinary indulgence of nature; those faculties which in others use to be single, and are thought necessarily to be so, as excluding each the other, were united in him. Memory, fancy, judgment, elocution, great modesty and no less assurance, a comprehension of things, and fluency of words; an aptness for the pleasant

and sufficiency for the rugged parts of knowledge ; a courage to encounter, and an industry to master all things, make up the character of his happy genius. Which felicity of temper was seconded by the circumstances of the times in which he lived, which engaged him severally to exert and cultivate his faculties. Before the national calamity of the civil war, he had secured the foundations of the whole circle of learning, by his own indefatigable study, as also the indulgent care of his tutor, Dr. Busby, than whom no person is more happy in the arts of transfusing his knowledge into others ; and the particular encouragement of Dr. Fell, the dean, who always looked upon him as a part of his family, and treated him with the same concern as his own children.

When the war broke out, he had the benefit of being, instead of one, in several Universities : Oxford was then an epitome of the whole nation, and all the business of it ; there was here the Court, the garrison, the flower of the nobility and gentry, lawyers and divines of all England. And times of action have somewhat peculiar in them to ferment and invigorate the mind, which is enervated by the softness of peace. The calamitous times which succeeded, as they engaged him *to the exercise of popular preaching, a talent which nothing besides necessity and practice can*

cultivate; so they led him out into foreign parts, entered him into the managery of business of greatest trust and hazard, and made him as well read in men as in books. After all this, it was no small advantage to be returned by the King's happy restoration to the University, and to the opportunities of reading and conversation with learned men, and in that conspicuous theatre to have the obligation of a public employment to exert all his faculties, and with utmost endeavour to improve and communicate his knowledge. And we may say it without envy, that few of his time had either a greater compass, or a deeper insight into all the parts of learning,—the modern and learned languages, rhetoric, philosophy, mathematics, history, antiquity, moral and polemical divinity, all which was not to be pumped up, or ransacked out of commonplace books, but was ready at hand, digested for his own use and communication in discourse to others.

From his first childhood he had a strong impression of piety, and the duties owed to God and men, which next to Divine grace may be ascribed to the strict and severe education which he had from his father; a blessing that cannot be sufficiently valued, and on which he often reflected with a great sense of gratitude. Hereby, notwithstanding the licence of war, and incitations of youth

he preserved his innocence, and love of God and virtue, till he made the more immediate service of them his profession. In his constitution he had a great deal of warmth and vigour, which made him apt to take fire upon provocation; but he was well aware of it, and kept a peculiar guard upon that weak part: so that his heat was reserved for the great concerns of the honour of God, and the service of his Prince and country, wherein he was altogether indefatigable, and in the most dismal appearances of affairs would never desert them, nor despair of their restoration. There was not in the world a man of clearer honesty and courage; no temptation could bribe him to do a base thing, or terror affright him from the doing of a good one.

This made his friendships as lasting and inviolable as his life, without the dirty considerations of profit, or sly reserves of craft; not the pagantry of ceremonious address, or cold civility; much less the servile falseness of obsequious flattery. It was a solid and masculine kindness, a perfect coalition of affections and minds: so that there was nothing he possessed, but it was his friends' as absolutely as it was his own; and it *became a general observation, that he and they had all things in common.*

This temper of his directed him to live with

great kindness with his neighbours and acquaintance, so that Eton College, while he lived there, was but one family, his lodging being every fellow's chamber, and they as much at home with him as in their own apartment. And in the University, though his station and parts might object him to envy, he had no competition or difference with any person; so that no man ever lived with a more universal goodwill of all that knew him, or died with a more general sorrow at his loss.

His conversation was always cheerful and entertaining, especially in the reception of his acquaintance at his table, and friendly visits. And in the evening after he had wearied himself with the studies of the day, which he generally continued till eight o'clock at night, during the many years he held the chair, soon after which he was to be called away to the night prayers of the College; this short interval he made as easy as he could to himself and those that were with him: and he had great reason to relax his mind at this time with a little cheerful discourse, there being no person who more literally verified the saying of the wise man, that "much study is a weariness to the flesh." After his day's work he was used to be as faint and spent, as if he had been labouring all the time with the scythe or flail; and his intention of thought made such waste upon his

spirits, that he was frequently in hazard, while at study, to fall into a swoon, and forced to rise from his seat, and walk about his room for some time, before he could recover himself.

To render himself secure from the inordination of intemperance, he frequently abstained from lawful satisfactions, by the stated returns of fasting and abstinence, and continuance in celibacy during his whole life. Nor had his singular abilities and endowments the usual effect to make him proud and contemptuous; all his discourses were with deference and respect, and were spoken with weight becoming a professor, but the softness of a learner.

In his conversation he was exceedingly tender of saying anything that might administer offence, or reflect upon any one's reputation; and most ready, in case of resentment, to give the person aggrieved, whoever he might be, the utmost satisfaction. A remarkable proof hereof is his dealing with one who had taken part with the Rebels in the late war, and who was said to have done an act of cruelty therein, which Dr. Allestree in a private discourse had chanced to mention. The party concerned hearing hereof, wrote to the *Doctor*, professing his innocence, and charging *him with uncharitableness* in believing, and *injustice in reporting* such an untruth. Hereupon,

notwithstanding that the matter of fact had for about thirty years gone on as common fame, and also had been charged in print, and that collateral evidence by a person now alive and a sufferer from the same hand, had been produced to enforce the probability, and that here nothing was asserted but on the credit of what had been formerly heard; yet Dr. Allestree by letter desired the said complainant's pardon: who, without regard to the laws of civility, printed it as a vindication of his innocence, when indeed it was rather a proof of the Doctor's candour, and an evidence that the complainant wanted better arguments for his defence. But it were to be wished, that they who were in their youth so unhappy as to be engaged in an ill cause, would spend their old age, which God's and the King's mercy has given them, rather in repenting of what they have done amiss, than in contesting what they have not done; and would more busy themselves in humble retractions than passionate apologies.

His contempt of the world was very extraordinary, as in his large and constant charities, both by settled pensions to indigent persons and families, and occasional alms; so also his bounteous hospitality, which will need no attestation, being performed in so conspicuous a scene as Eton, and in the view of Windsor, which for

several years His Majesty has favoured with his court and presence. Yet a higher instance hereof will be his giving away a fixed and constant revenue that he might have fairly retained, to the value of above three hundred pounds by the year ; the particulars whereof are thus.

At His Majesty's return, as we have intimated, he was made Canon of Christ Church in Oxford, and soon after King's Professor in the chair of Divinity, to which employment a canonry of the said church, and the rectory of Ewe Elme in the said county and diocese are annexed, so that the profit of two canonries and the rectory belonged to him, and being earned with the labour of that weighty charge, no one who made a just estimate of things, would have envied it to him ; but he regretted it to himself, and for several years gave the whole profit of one of his canonries to the repairs of the college : and afterwards being moved by the Right Rev. Father in God the Lord Bishop of Winchester, in the behalf of an ancient student of the college, who was destitute of a suitable support, he entirely quitted the advantage of the aforesaid canonry to him. And as to the living, he never received a penny from it, but left it to a friend, whose circumstances required such an accession.

The revenue of Eton had a suitable disposal,

the west side of the outward court of the college being built from the ground and finished at his single expense. And whereas at his coming to Eton, he found the society dipped in a great debt, by an ill custom brought in by the pretended godly men of the late times, who at the year's end divided whatever money remained after the ordinary payments were discharged, incidental ones and debts contracted being still thrown off to the future year; which in time grew to a bulk that endangered the college's becoming bankrupt. To remedy this he by an exemplary retrenchment of his own dues, prevailed on the society to do the like; so that within few years the college has paid above a thousand pound debt, expended above two thousand pounds in repairs, and every day goes on to do things honourable and beneficial to the society.

It may not here be omitted, though it be an instance of lesser moment, that the edition of the first volume of his sermons was entirely upon an account of charity. For his ingenious kinsman, Mr. James Allestree, the bookseller, from a plentiful fortune being by the fire of London reduced to great poverty, Dr. Allestree, besides other assistances, bestowed upon him the copies of eighteen of his sermons, to make some reparation to his losses.

But the uncontrollable proof of contempt of the world, is the dying poor, and not to have collected

anything against the hazards of fortune, and commonly pretended exigencies of old age and sickness; which was in a remarkable manner Dr. Allestree's case, he having never during his life purchased an inch of ground, nor any annuity or lease to the value of a penny; nor did he take care to renew the patrimonial estate which he held by a lease for life, though it were the place of his birth, which generally gives an endearment, and a desire to continue the possession: thereby, as the Author to the Hebrews expresses it, "sojourning in the earth as in a strange country, and showing plainly that he looked for a better one, and a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

His greatest treasure was his library, which was indeed a considerable one, both for the number of books and choice of them; but these he disposed of by deed before his death to the University of Oxford, for the use of his successors in the chair. So that his executors had only his personal estate to share among them; which he took to be so inconsiderable, that he thought it not worth the formality of a will; but designing, after the distributing some little remembrances among his friends, that small pittance which *remained to his relations*, conceived that the *law by an administration* would of course divide

it among them. But being told by his friend, to whom he communicated this purpose of his, that in this malicious world the dying intestate would be a thing of ill fame, and interpreted the product of an unwillingness to think of death, or part with what he had : and that what he so left would come less obligingly to his relations, and probably would occasion contention among them : he took the advice, and by will disposed of such legacies as he thought fit to leave to the poor and to his friends, and gave the remainder among his sisters and their children.

Though he hung thus loose from the world, he neither was negligent in secular affairs, nor unskilful in the managery of them ; which was made manifest by his dextrous discharge of the private trusts committed to him in behalf of his dead friends, and the administration of his public employments. He was for several years treasurer of Christ Church, in a busy time of their repairing of the ruins made by the intruding usurpers ; and amidst the necessary avocations of study, found leisure for a full discharge of that troublesome employment.

The college of Eton, as I intimated before, he found in a very ill condition as to its revenue and fabric, and what was no less a mischief, unstatutable and unreasonable grants of leases ; to all

which, excepting one, whose reduction must be the work of time, he applied effectual remedies. The school he found in a low condition, but by his prudence in the choice of a learned, discreet, and diligent master ; by his interest, in bringing young gentlemen and persons of quality thither, and by his great kindness to them when there ; and taking care for the building fit accommodation for their reception within the precincts of the college, in few years the school grew into that great reputation and credit which it yet maintains.

And here we may not pass by another considerable service done in behalf of the said school, and also King's College in Cambridge, whose seminary it is : that whereas both those societies were formerly under the discouragement, that the fellowships of Eton were generally disposed of to persons of foreign education ; by the vigorous interposition of Dr. Allestree added to the petition of the provost and fellows of King's College, his sacred Majesty was pleased to pass a grant under the broad seal, that in all future times five of the seven fellows should be such as had been bred in Eton school, and were fellows of King's College, which has ever since taken place, and will be a perpetual incitement to diligent study, and *virtuous endeavour* in both those royal foundations. *In the managery* of the business of the chair of

Divinity, as he performed the scholastic part with great sufficiency in exact and dextrous untying the knots of argument, and solid determination of controverted points, so that he was not oppressed by the fame of any of his most eminent predecessors: his prudence was very remarkable in the choice of subjects to be treated on; for he wasted not time and opportunity in the barren insignificant parts of school Divinity, but insisted on the fundamental grounds of controversy, between the Church of England, and the most formidable enemies thereof. With an equal steadiness he asserted the Gospel truth, against the usurpations of Rome, the innovations of Geneva, the blasphemies of Cracow, and the monsters of our own Malmsbury, never intermeddling with the unfathomable abyss of God's decrees, the indeterminate five points; which in all times and in all countries wherever they have happened to be debated, passed from the schools to the state, and shocked the government and public peace. By his judicious care herein, though he found the University in a ferment, and a great part of its growing hopes sufficiently seasoned with ill prepossessions, he so brought it to pass, that during the whole tract of seventeen years that he held the chair, there was no factious bandying of opinions, nor petulant sidings on the account of them;

which thing disturbed the peace of the last age, and helped forward to inflame those animosities, which ended in the execrable mischiefs of the civil war.

Upon the 28th day of January in the year 1680, this excellent person after a life spent in indefatigable studies, and faithful endeavours for his religion, his King and country, and after the patient sufferance of a long and painful sickness, with Christian resignation and full assurance, rendered his soul into the hands of GOD; and on the 1st of February was decently interred in the choir of the collegiate church at Eton, where his executors erected to his memory a monument of white marble with the following inscription :

H. S. I. RICARDUS ALLESTREE, Cathedræ Theologicæ in Universitate Oxoniensi Professor Regius, Ecclesiæ Christi ibidem Præbendarius, et Collegii hujus Ætonensis Præpositus; muniis istis singulis ita par, ut et omnibus major. In disputationibus irrefragabilis, concionibus flex-animus, negotiis solers, vita integer, pietate sanctus. Episcopales infulas eadem industria evitavit, qua alii ambiunt; cui rectius visum, Ecclesiam defendere, instruere, ornare, quam regere. Laboribus studiisque perpetuis exhaustus, morte, si quis alius præmatura, obiit vir desideratissimus Januarii XXVII. AN. M. DC. LXXX. ætatis LX. Nobile sibi monumentum, aræ adjacentis latus occidentale, quod à fundamentis propriis impensis struxit, vivus sibi statuit. *Brevem hanc tabellam hæredes defuncto posuere.*



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